

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES: Wednesday, December 10, 2014  
GCTV Studios, 393 Main Street, Greenfield MA  
Approved 02.11.15**

**Present:** Margaret Betts (MB); Maryelen Calderwood (MC); Jeff Comenitz (JC); Donna Gleason (DG); Jordana Harper, Superintendent (JH); William Martin (WM); Adrienne Nunez (AN); Francina Wisnewski (FW). Student representatives Sam Kennedy, Lily Richards.

**Absent:** none

**Also present:** Tamara Grogan, GHS French teacher; Elizabeth Gilman, GPS Business Manager; Peter Smith, School Attorney; Suzanne Sullivan, principal, Discovery School at Four Corners; Donna Woodcock, principal GHS; other school staff, citizens and the press.

### **I. Call to Order**

With a quorum present (MB, MC, JC, DG, WM, AN, FW), Chair Calderwood called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

### **II. Approval of Minutes**

FW moved to table consideration of minutes of Nov. 12, 2014, pending review of V. I. motion. DG 2nd. Motion to table passed unanimously.

### **III. Public Comment**

None

### **IV. Reports**

#### **A. Student Representative**

Kennedy reported on activities at GHS, including holiday music concert; Special Olympics tournament; kettle-ringing; well-attended open house; start of winter sports this week.

#### **B. Chair**

MC presented report:

- Central office departures: Nate Tripp, human resources assistant; Elizabeth Gilman, Business Manager (as of Jan. 1).
- Reviewing posting/hiring process
- January mtg date likely to change.
- Budget season may involve extra mtgs.
- Barbara Tillmans, noted supporter of local government, passed away.

#### **C. Superintendent**

JH provided an overview of her report, including

- school highlights:
  - GHS holiday concert
  - GMS Taste of World Culture event and One School, One Book
  - Math/Science Academy: 6th grade, 17 out of 18 scored proficient/advanced category for MCAS math
  - Federal St. students delivering wreaths to community partners
  - Four Corners: Walk to School program
  - Newton School attending Nutcracker
  - AEL enrollment close to all-time high
- winter weather school cancellations and late openings

- District-Determined Measures: plan submitted to DESE, for implementation next yr.
- Request by Chair MC for MCAS reports on all schools
- 5-yr plan of Capital Request. Discussion: Does not include future admin. building.
- Superintendent Draft Goals
- Jan 17: district governance program

**WM moved to accept the four goals described by the Superintendent compatible with DESE regulations. MB 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.**

JC requests JH to provide capital project info to Budget Subcte.

“Technology Capital Expenditures” document: Request to JH to clarify: “15 new hires” in 3rd block.

## **D. Subcommittees**

### **1. Negotiations**

DG reported that Subcte has held 1st mtg with executive secretaries, 6th mtg with custodians. New evaluation document helpful to process.

### **2. Policy**

FW reported on progress to update student-parent handbook to reflect current laws. Supt-appointed team to review.

**WM moved to accept the student parent handbook for the 2014-15 school year, as adopted by the School Committee, and to direct Greenfield Public Schools to use the handbook on an interim basis through June 30, 2015. MG 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.**

Rental policy: Discussions in process. Subcte set up 3 fee-level groups: town/school event; non-profit organizations; for-profit organizations. Concern: use of custodians. Policy already in place re: playgrounds, athletic fields. Supt. office oversees facilities calendar. Rates are lowest-possible cf. neighboring districts.

MIAA: Discussion re: Nov. 12, 2014 vote, “Any athlete, on any team for any sport, shall not be negatively affected by attending a School Committee sanctioned event, to be compliant with MIAA rules and regulations.” Purpose was to remove “punishment,” i.e., ban beyond preconditioning or conditioning requirements, which are unique to each sport and position, within coach’s judgment. FW recommends following current athlete attendance policies. Request to share MIAA rules with coaches. Discussion to be continued in subcte.

### **3. Health & Safety**

AN reported – no report.

## **V. Business Topics**

### **1. GHS Trip to French Riviera – Tamara Grogan**

French teacher Tamara Grogan presented overview of student trip to France over April break; joint trip with GHS (10 students) and Frontier High School (20 students); led by EF Educational Tours. 5 chaperones for 30 students. Discussion: criteria for choosing chaperones; all GHS chaperones are CORI-checked.

**FW moved that Supt. Harper, Principal Woodcock, and Tamara Grogan meet and clear out any conflicts of interest, CORIs and other requirements needed for the trip. MB 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.**

**MB made a motion that the trip to the French Riviera scheduled for April 2015 for 10 GHS students is authorized by Greenfield School Cte, pending confirmation of chaperones' CORI checks.** AN 2nd. Discussion: concern not to set precedent of using family members as chaperones; merits and concerns of international travel and cost. How does district offer equal opportunity for trips? For this trip: payment plan, fundraising, alternating years to lesser-cost Quebec. Atty. Smith: need for medical care, awareness of medical needs of students; full releases to provide medical treatment. EF insurance covers. Appreciation to Grogan for providing opportunities to students.  
**Motion passed 6-0-2 (DG, WM abstain).**

## **2. Discovery School Innovation Status Report**

Principal Suzanne Sullivan presented report, including history of creation of Discovery School and innovation/autonomy focus on thematic content, cross-curriculum and cross-grade-level; high student engagement, school community; scheduling – uninterrupted academic time in AM, integrated-arts in PM; extended planning time. Data overview: attendance; enrollment; assessment; reduction of achievement gaps.

Discussion: \$ from choice-in students pays for additional staff planning. Challenges: supporting students in needs-improvement category. Focus on process writing. Nutritional “snack market” collaboration with Just Roots. MC: request data on increase in proficiency re: students of color, high-needs students. Process of accepting in-district students to innovation schools. Commend advanced math MCAS scores, use of student data. Timing of annual reports from schools: November-March.

## **3. MSBA Accelerated Repair Application for 2015-2016**

JH presented Memo from Lane Kelly, “Accelerated Repair Program.”

**DG moved that the School Committee of the Greenfield Public School authorizes the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest dated Jan. 1, 2015, for the Federal Street School, located at 125 Federal Street, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority categories for which the Town of Greenfield may be invited to apply to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future. The priority identified by the District in this application is for the replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of the application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority or commits the Greenfield School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.**

MB 2nd. Discussion: Why Newton vs. Federal Street? Needs at Federal Street greater, more urgent; greater energy impact. State \$ not guaranteed, but likely.

**Motion passed unanimously.**

## **4. School Finance**

At request of MC, JH proposed special meeting to learn about school finance structure and budget process, to include Liz Gilman and Mark Abrahams, CPA. MC to poll members to set date.

## **5. Student Growth Percentile – Jeff Comenitz**

JC gave presentation on Student Growth Percentile, with DESE on-line tutorial, school profiles.  
Discussion: transition to PARCC.

**VI. Executive Session**

WM made a motion to go into executive session for purposes of litigation.

DG 2nd. Roll call vote: Yes: MB, MC, JC, DG, WM, AN, FW. Motion passed unanimously. Moved into executive session at 9:47 p.m.

MB moved to return to public session. 2nd DC. Yes: MB, MC, JC, DG, WM, AN, FW. Motion passed unanimously. Public session resumed at 10:15 p.m.

**VII. Adjournment**

MB moved to adjourn. 2nd WM. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Farber  
Recording Secretary